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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

PLASTER BANDAGES.—*The American Journal of Surgery* says that crinoline gauze provides a better foundation for plaster bandages than soft gauze. A bandage of this kind should be rolled very loosely. It may be kept tight in gutta-percha sealed with chloroform.

CASTOR OIL AND APPENDICITIS.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoting from a German contemporary, states that cases with perforating lesions in the appendix are invariably those in which castor oil has been taken not long before. It recommends caution in giving laxatives, even when the case does not suggest actual appendicitis.

FATIGUE AND EFFICIENCY.—*The Medical Record*, in an editorial, says the best surety against accident during work is an alert, refreshed mind in a virile body. A sure predisposition to accident is an exhausted, run-down, devitalized human machine. Bank clerks make most of their errors in the late afternoon, whence these institutions are closed early, the employees' mistakes being found to be too expensive. Many other instances are cited. These facts should be remembered in connection with the long hours on duty demanded of nurses in most hospitals.

INSOMNIA.—*The Interstate Medical Journal*, in a synopsis of articles on this subject, recommends the method of wooing sleep advocated by Learned. The patient, lying on his back, endeavors to touch the head and foot of the bed simultaneously by stretching the body, bringing into play muscles not used during the day. The head is then raised one inch above the pillow and held so while the patient breathes very slowly and deeply. When it becomes too heavy to hold up it is allowed to fall back on the pillow. The same action is repeated first with the right foot, then with the left. A few cycles often bring sleep. A cold pack is also advocated, also a lukewarm bath before retiring, or a sitz bath, if a full bath is not practicable. If external noises cause wakefulness, a plug of vaselined cotton, or a ball of paraffine wax, may be inserted in the opening of the ear.

FRIAR'S BALSAM.—*The American Journal of Surgery* says compound tincture of benzoin to be reapplied from time to time, forms a useful

protective film for wounds of the mucous membrane, after operations in the mouth, or anus, or for cracked nipples.

DENGUE.—In a paper in the *Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin*, on dengue, or breakbone fever, Dr. E. B. Stitt says that dengue is transmitted by mosquitos, the common culicine mosquito of the tropics, *Culex fatigans*. The most marked diagnostic symptoms are the slowness of the pulse, the intense soreness at the seat of pain, especially when this is in the eyeballs, and a rash which appears about the third or fourth day, beginning about the base of the thumbs and extending over the wrists. There is a profound loss of appetite, interest, and energy and deep depression of spirits during convalescence. A patient may contract it in the south and come north before it develops.

LIFE OF CONNECTIVE TISSUE SEPARATED FROM ORGANISM.—*The Journal of Experimental Medicine* states that Dr. A. H. Eveling has performed a series of experiments which show that connective tissue can be kept in a condition of active growth outside of the organism for more than eleven months, that its mass increases considerably and its power of reproducing itself, after such a long period, is more active than at the beginning of its separate life.

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF UTERINE CANCER.—Dr. H. J. Boldt, in a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, says that women should be instructed to report any abnormal discharge from the vagina, as it may be a symptom of cancer of the uterus. Leucorrhœa, prolonged or unusually profuse, bleeding at the menstrual period, small amounts of blood passed at other times, should all be viewed with suspicion. Particularly should this be the case after the fortieth year, and after the menopause. Delay is fatal. An early operation gives hope of a favorable result. The same advice applies to lumps in the breast, which may be cancerous in nature, or merely in the beginning a benign tumor, and in any case should be removed as speedily as possible.

HEAT IN SHOCK.—The patient should be surrounded with dry heat, hot water-bags, hot flannels, etc., and a hot-water bag over the heart is a valuable stimulant.

MAKING BUTTERMILK.—Dr. Alexander Armstrong says that small glass churns, holding from one to four quarts of milk can be procured and with these buttermilk can easily be obtained at home. New milk, allowed to thicken for twenty-four hours in a warm room and then churned for from five to eight minutes will give a fresh, evenly distributed, curdy buttermilk, much superior to the artificial product made from lactic acid tablets. A small amount of butter accumulates on the dasher and can be easily removed.

DANGERS OF ABRUPT CHANGES OF POSITION DURING FEVER.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoting from a South American contemporary, says that when a reclining person sits up suddenly the heart bumps against the column of blood below it. In health the heart yields, the column of blood sinks down, the blood flows out of the vessels in the brain. If the myocardium is weak, it may not be able to stand the sudden strain on it from this change of position. Patients with pneumonia have died just as they were raised to a sitting position. When a fever patient sits up in bed the pulse usually runs up and becomes weaker. He should always be raised very gradually to the sitting position. The reclining position is of greater and more certain value than many heart tonics.

THE MONTESSORI METHOD FROM A PHYSICIAN'S STANDPOINT.—Dr. George W. Jacoby has a very interesting article on this subject in the *Medical Record*. This method begins the instruction of children at a very early age, permitting them to educate themselves by means of their natural tendency to investigate and explore everything within their reach. The teacher merely directs their activities. It enables children from four to five years of age to occupy the same plane of mental development as children who have already gone to school for two or three years. It is also used with admirable effect for the education of children who are mentally deficient. In all children it arouses that initiative and mental spontaneity which will enable the child to think and act independently. It seems destined to supersede the kindergarten.

ADVICE AFTER OPERATIONS.—Dr. Leonard Freeman in a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* offers valuable advice to patients who have undergone operations and are leaving the hospital. Among the statements to reassure the patient it may be said that subsequent pain and soreness are the natural result of a surgical operation; it is an injury, like a fall from a horse. The skin with its many small nerves has been cut, the muscles separated and more or less strained and bruised, which is certain to produce soreness, which means little and should be disregarded as far as possible. Numbness, over-sensitiveness, even actual pain in the scar mean little. Uncomfortable symptoms are apt to be more pronounced at night when there is nothing to divert the attention. These sensations will disappear after a time.

A CORRECTION.—In this department for April, page 534, two printer's errors occurred which escaped detection. Autotypoid should read anti-typoid, and "but one acquired the disease" should read "not one acquired," etc.—ED.